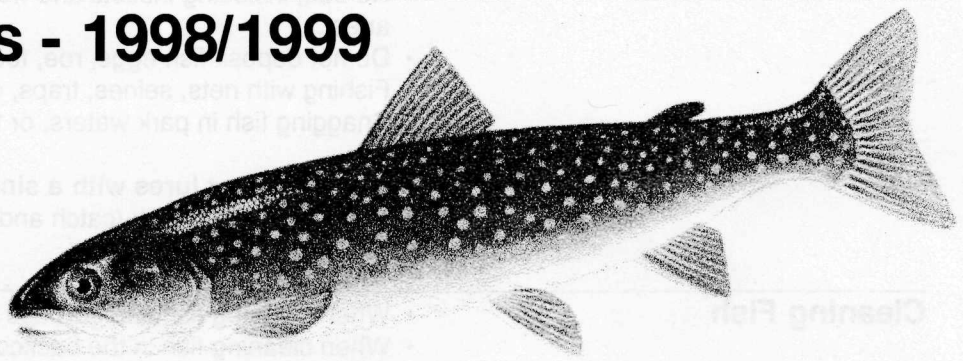


Fishing Regulations - 1998/1999



Bull Trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*)

All bull trout caught in Glacier National Park must immediately be released.

Many people wonder why the National Park Service no longer plants fish in park waters after this was done for many decades to enhance sport fishing. The reason is simple. The introduction of exotic game fishes was found to be detrimental to Glacier's native fishes. Predation and competition for space and food adversely affected several native species, and hybridization

between indigenous and non-native species of fish also occurred. The native westslope cutthroat trout has been all but eliminated from several lakes, where it was once the dominant species.

Today the National Park Service is engaged in fisheries research to determine the extent of damage to native fish populations, and to explore possible

means for re-establishing native fishes in some waters where they have been eliminated or replaced by hybrid populations. Paramount importance is attached to the goal of ensuring the future survival of Glacier National Park's unique native fishes for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations.

Fishing in Glacier

The primary purpose of Glacier National Park is to preserve natural ecosystems for their aesthetic, educational, cultural and scientific values. Fishing is permitted when consistent with preservation or restoration of natural aquatic environments, native fishes, and other aquatic life. Objectives of the management of fish and aquatic environments in the park are:

- To encourage appreciation for, and interest in, preservation of native fishes in natural, unspoiled aquatic habitats.
- To insure that man's use of native fishes will not interfere with natural food chain relationships between aquatic organisms, birds, mammals, and other animals.
- To provide angling opportunities for wild fish in a natural environment, as part of the visitor's total park experience.
- To maintain natural aquatic environments as they would now exist if modern man had not interfered. It is realized that this goal cannot be completely attained, but it will be approached as nearly as possible. Fish are no longer stocked or planted in park waters.

To fulfill these objectives, certain regulations, guidelines, and courtesies must be followed.

Season

General park season is from the third Saturday in May, through November 30, with some exceptions:

- Waterton Lake season, catch and possession limits are the same as set by Canada*
 - Lower Two Medicine Lake season, catch and possession limits are set by the Blackfeet Nation.*
 - Lake McDonald and St. Mary Lake are open to lake trout (mackinaw) fishing only from April 1 through December 31.
 - North and Middle Forks of the Flathead River, see *Boundary Rivers* section.
- *Regulations may change from year to year. Check before fishing these waters.

Catch and Possession Limits

Daily catch and possession limits will not exceed five (5) fish, including no more than: two (2) cutthroat trout, five (5) burbot (ling), five (5) northern pike, five (5) whitefish, five (5) kokanee salmon, five (5) brook trout, five (5) grayling, five (5) rainbow trout, five (5) lake trout (mackinaw).

Fishing for bull trout is prohibited and any bull trout incidentally caught must be immediately released.

Catch and release fishing only:

- Fish caught in Lower McDonald Creek (from the Quarter Circle Bridge and upstream, extending into Lake McDonald for a radius of 300 feet) must be handled carefully and released immediately to the stream/lake. Only artificial flies or lures with a single hook may be used in Lower McDonald Creek. **No fish of any species may be in possession at any time along this stream/lake.**
- Fish caught in Hidden Lake and outlet must be released, except when closed for spawning.
- Cutthroat trout caught on the North Fork of the Flathead River must be released in accordance with state regulations.

Equipment and Bait

- Fishing is allowed by hook and line only.
- The rod or line must be hand held.
- The use of artificial lures and flies is strongly recommended.
- The use of fish or fish parts, including non-preserved fish eggs, of any species is prohibited.
- No bait, including insects and worms, may be collected inside the park's boundaries..
- Do not deposit fish eggs, roe, food, or other substances in waters to attract fish.
- Fishing with nets, seines, traps, drugs, or explosives is prohibited.
- Snagging fish in park waters, or from park lands, is prohibited.

Artificial flies or lures with a single hook only:

Lower McDonald Creek (catch and release fishing only)

Cleaning Fish

- When cleaning fish, use garbage cans where available for entrail disposal.
 - When cleaning fish in the backcountry, puncture the air bladder, and throw entrails into deep water at least 200 feet from the nearest campsite or trail. Do not bury or burn entrails, as they will attract bears.
 - Consider "catch and release" fishing; otherwise, keep only enough fish for a meal. Be a clean fisherman! Leave nothing behind--except a few footprints.
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Boundary Rivers

The Middle Fork of the Flathead River is outside of the park, and a Montana State fishing license is required. When fishing from the park lands along the North Fork of the Flathead River, park catch and possession limits, as well as other park fishing regulations are applicable, with the exception of the state regulations pertaining to cutthroat trout. (see Catch and Possession Limits section)

Closed Waters

The following areas are closed to fishing:

- Kintla Creek between Kintla Lake and Upper Kintla Lake
 - Upper Kintla Lake
 - Bowman Creek above Bowman Lake
 - Logging Creek between Logging Lake and Grace Lake
 - Cracker Lake
 - The following creeks are closed for their entire length: Ole, Park, Muir, Coal, Nyack, and Fish Creeks.
 - Hidden Lake and outlet creek during cutthroat trout spawning.
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Fishing Tips

The success of a fisherman depends on skill, lures used, weather conditions, time of year, whether a boat is used or not, and the body of water fished. The following are some helpful tips:

Waterfalls prevented fish from naturally reaching many streams and lakes, If you are going to fish, check before making a long hike.

Fish usually feed in the early morning and evening.

Lake trout (mackinaw) are in deep water during the hot summer months, and are best caught by trolling.

Fish are on the bottom when the water is high and murky. During this time they feed on materials dislodged from the bottom. Lures that imitate insect larvae are most successful.

Later in the season, when streams are clear, flies are better. The best fly fishing is when a fisherman can match a local insect hatch.

Bears

Consider yourself lucky to see a black or grizzly bear. But remember...the wilderness is their home. Please be a well-mannered guest. Bears are usually shy; however, make no attempt to approach or startle them. They have been known to attack without warning. When hiking make some noise to alert them of your presence. Never offer food to bears and never get between a sow and cub. As bears have an excellent sense of smell, it is important to avoid the use of odorous food. Backcountry camping regulations require that food, cooking utensils, and food containers be suspended from the designated food hanging device at all times, except mealtimes. If needed, when not in a designated campground, suspend food and cooking utensils at least 10 feet above the ground and 4 feet from any tree trunk. In the absence of trees, store food and cooking gear in approved bear resistant food containers. Never leave food unattended. Report all bear sightings to a ranger.

For More Information

Additional information on fishing in Glacier National Park is available at park bookstores or by calling the Glacier Natural History Association at 406-888-5756.

Request:

Fishing the Flathead River \$1.00

